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Learning benefits of a translation corpus for novice ASL-English interpreters

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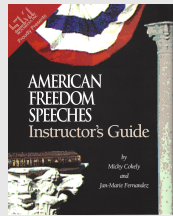
Department of ASL & Interpreter Education

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Learning benefits of a translation corpus for novice ASL-English interpreters

What benefit would an ASL L1 translation corpus offer ASL L2 novice interpreters?

“American Freedom Speeches” (AFS) Translation Corpus



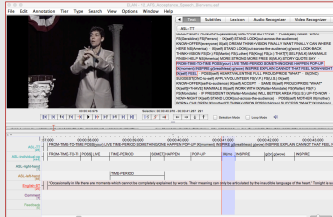
DVD of translations from Sign Media, Inc.

ASL translations of English Political Speeches

Speech Title	Original Orator/Author	Deaf Translator/Performer	Length (approx. min./sec.)
1. Preamble to the Constitution	Various authors	Patrick Graybill	1:00
2. I Have a Dream*	Martin Luther King, Jr.	David Hamilton	7:00
3. Struggle for Justice*	Cesar Chavez	Mark Morales	7:30
4. On Human Rights*	Jimmy Carter	Patrick Graybill	7:30
5. Acceptance Speech*	Geraldine Ferraro	MJ Bienvenu	5:00
6. The Pledge of Allegiance	Francis Bellamy	Patrick Graybill	1:00
Total time			29:00

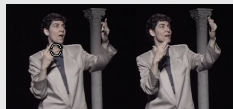
*only certain excerpts are translated

Translation text video annotated using ELAN & ST > TT idea units aligned and coded in Excel



Examples of potentially challenging source texts for novices

ST: Tonight, the daughter of working Americans tells all Americans that the future is within our reach if we're willing to reach for it.



APPROACH

TT: NS(America) AREA. BLUE+SHIRT-COLLAR WORK HONORIFIC(blue-collar-workers) KNOW+THAT WANT SUCCESS SOMETHING/ONE MUST WORK+ APPROACH. ARRIVE(arrive-at-achievement)



ARRIVE

TT: On the issue of civil, voting rights and affirmative action for minorities must not go backwards. We must - and we will - move forward to open the doors of opportunity.



PROGRESS

ST: FS(civil) FS(rights) FS(affirmative) FS(action) VOTE FS(rights) IX(we) PROGRESS MUST MOVE-BACK CANNOT



MOVE-BACK

ST: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last.



FINALLY

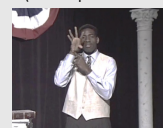
TT: FREE FINALLY FREE FINALLY. FREE FINALLY THANK-YOU GOD WE FINALLY FREE FINALLY

ST: This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope



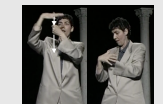
ds(feel-impact-of-decree)

TT: THAT PAPER ANNOUNCE. ds(feel-impact-of-decree) FEEL SAME ds(feel-impact) LIGHT ds(beacon-light-of-hope)+ THOUGHT. DOMAIN+BECKON g(headnod)



ds(beacon-light-of-hope)

ST: Tonight, we reclaim our dream.



OPPRESS

TT: OPPRESS(person-oppress-self) NOW TIME THROW-OFF-OPPRESSION(self-throw-off-oppression)



THROW-OFF-OPPRESSION

Problems addressed

- Interpreters struggle when translating into their B language (Nicodemus & Emmorey, 2013)
- Lack of access to Deaf translators who could serve as expert models (Stone, 2009)
- Subtle use of ASL depiction and prosodic markers is often invisible to ASL L2 learners until they are made explicit through labeling (Thumann, 2011; 2013)
- Limited exposure to formal ASL genres/registers
- ASL does not have a widely-used writing system that could be a tool for close analysis of the Source Text and Target Text
- Lack of ability to quickly search for authentic examples of how certain English constructions, idioms, metaphors, are handled by expert translators

Literature review

A preliminary review of the literature reveals that Corpus-Based Translation Studies (CTS) is an established area of research/methodology (Kruger, et al, 2011). Corpus-Based Interpreting Studies (CIS) is still emerging (Setton, 2011). Studies within CTS point to positive benefits of using translation corpora in translator education (Beeby, 2009, among others). In CIS, there are few studies that examine the use of corpora in spoken language interpreter education (Tohyama, et al., 2006). The use of corpora in signed language interpreter education appears to be unexplored.

Planning for implementation and research design

- ELAN was used to build the AFS Corpus—is there a better software interface for students to access, search, and navigate the data? (i.e., web-based interfaces)
- When would be the optimum time to introduce corpora into the interpreting curriculum? At what skill levels would corpora benefit students?
- What are the specific learning designs that are based on corpora tools? How can students be self-directed and independent in using them?
- How will we measure the learning benefits? What direct and indirect measures of benefit are appropriate?
- Should the size of the AFS Corpus be increased? What other genres/registers need to be added to a set of corpora built to support learning?

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